

## What else can parents do?

Parents are urged to learn as much about a film as possible before they permit their children to attend. Reading reviews and feature articles or speaking with your theater manager and friends are good ways to gather information in addition to the ratings.

We are interested in your views. Please let your theater manager know if you attend a movie theater and have any questions with regard to how the rating system is being implemented.

If you want further information about the rating system please write:

**The Classification and  
Rating Administration  
15503 Ventura Boulevard  
Encino, CA 91436**

**The National Association of Theatre Owners  
4605 Lankershim Boulevard, Suite 340  
North Hollywood, CA 91602**

This brochure is brought to you by the  
Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.  
and the National Association of Theatre Owners  
in association with your local theater.

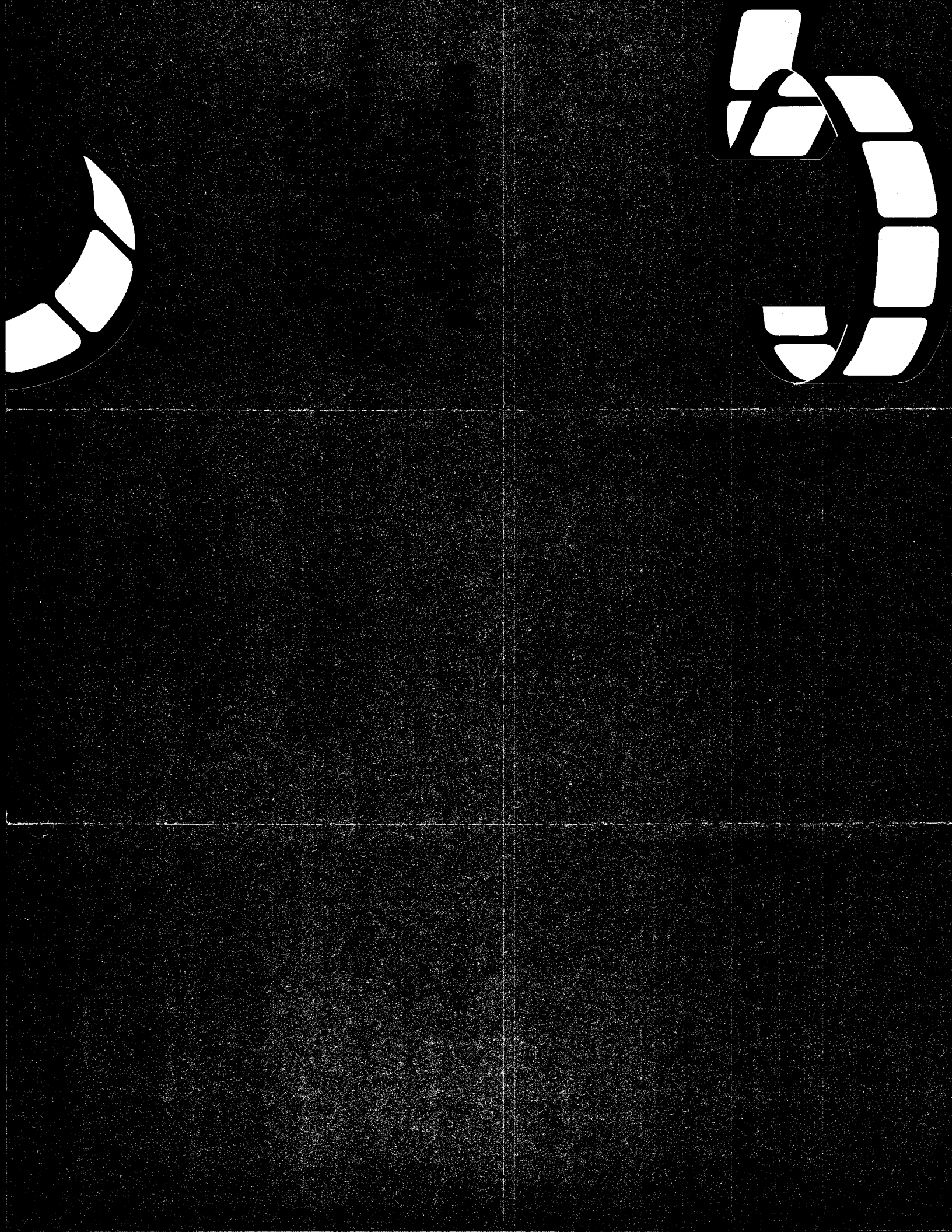
**EVERYTHING  
YOU ALWAYS  
WANTED TO KNOW  
ABOUT  
THE MOVIE  
RATING SYSTEM**

SENATE JUDICIARY

Exhibit No. 9

Date 4-4-07

Bill No. HB 397



## What is the purpose of the rating system?

The movie rating system is a voluntary system sponsored by the Motion Picture Association of America and the National Association of Theatre Owners to provide parents with advance information on films, enabling the parent to make judgments on movies they want or don't want their children to see.

## Do the ratings indicate if a movie is good or bad?

No, the system is not designed to serve the function of "critic." The ratings do not determine or reflect whether a film is "good" or "bad." The system is not intended to approve, disapprove or censor any film; it merely assigns a rating for guidance—leaving the decision-making responsibilities to the parents.

## Who gives movies their ratings?

Parents give the movies their ratings—men and women just like you. They are part of a specially designed committee called the film rating board of the Classification and Rating Administration. As a group they view each film and, after a group discussion, vote on its rating, making an educated estimate as to which rating most American parents will consider the most appropriate.

## What criteria do they use?

The rating board uses the criteria you as a parent use when deciding what is suitable viewing for your child. Theme, language, violence, nudity, sex and drug use are among those content areas considered in the decision-making process. Also assessed is how each of these elements is employed in the context of each individual film. The rating board places no special emphasis on any of these elements; all are considered and examined before a rating is given.

## What do the rating symbols mean?

### **G** General Audiences—All ages admitted.

Signifies that the film rated contains nothing most parents will consider offensive for even their youngest children to see or hear. Nudity, sex scenes, and scenes of drug use are absent; violence is minimal; snippets of dialogue may go beyond polite conversation but do not go beyond common everyday expressions.

### **PG** Parental Guidance Suggested—Some material may not be suitable for children. Signifies

that the film rated may contain some material parents might not like to expose to their young children—material that will clearly need to be examined or inquired about before children are allowed to attend the film. Explicit sex scenes and scenes of drug use are absent; nudity, if present, is seen only briefly; horror and violence do not exceed moderate levels.

### **PG-13** Parents Strongly Cautioned—Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. Signifies that the film rated may be inappropriate for pre-teens. Parents should be especially

careful about letting their younger children attend. Rough or persistent violence is absent; sexually-oriented nudity is generally absent; some scenes of drug use may be seen; some use of one of the harsher sexually-derived words may be heard.

### **R** Restricted—Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian (age varies in some jurisdictions). Signifies that the rating board has concluded

that the film rated may contain some adult material. Parents are urged to learn more about the film before taking their children to see it. An R may be assigned due to, among other things, a film's use of language, theme, violence, sex or its portrayal of drug use.

### **NC-17** No One 17 and Under Admitted.

Signifies that the rating board believes that most American parents would feel that the film is patently adult and that children age 17 and under should not be admitted to it. The film may contain explicit sex scenes, an accumulation of sexually-oriented language, and/or scenes of excessive violence. The NC-17 designation does not, however, signify that the rated film is obscene or pornographic in terms of sex, language or violence.

## Is the rating system a law?

No, the rating system is strictly voluntary and carries no force of law.

## Can a rating be changed?

Yes, the rules permit movie producers to re-edit their films and re-submit them in hopes of receiving another rating. Producers may also appeal a rating decision to the Rating Appeals Board, which is composed of men and women from the industry organizations that sponsor the rating system. A two-thirds secret ballot vote of those present on the Appeals Board may overturn a rating board decision.

## Do all movies have to be rated?

No. Submitting a film is purely a voluntary decision made by the filmmakers. However, the overwhelming majority of the producers creating entertaining, responsible films do in fact submit their films for ratings. All five Classification and Rating Administration rating symbols have been trademarked and may not be self-applied.

## Who enforces the ratings?

While the decision to enforce the rating system is purely voluntary, the overwhelming majority of theaters follow the Classification and Rating Administration's guidelines and diligently enforce its provisions.

## How do you get more information about a rating?

For additional information about the voluntary movie rating system and ratings for new releases, visit the Motion Picture Association of America's home page on the World Wide Web. Our address is <http://www.mpa.org>. Or, in select cities, you may use the interactive phone guide, Moviefone.

Testimony to be read in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee of the State of Montana regarding HB 597

Senate Judiciary Committee members:

My name is Gary Dupuis, I am General Manager of Polson Theatres, and also President of the Montana Association of Theatre Owners

Polson Theatres owns and operates 11 movie theatres 9 of which are in Montana (Polson, Roman, Whitefish, Dillon, Havre, Glasgow, Wolf Point, Shelby and Cut Bank) and by June we will be opening the Theatre in Lewistown. This will make a total of 22 screens in 10 Montana towns and 9 different Counties.

My wife Becky and I operate the family owned theatre business. Becky, and I have two children of our own, Becky teaches Sunday school and the welfare of all children is of concern to us. We don't believe that this type of legislation is the way to protect kids.

We strongly oppose HB 597 for these reasons:

- 1) Allowing each county or municipality to adopt their own Obscenity Laws would result in a confusing and possible conflicting set of laws and ordinances. Following different laws in each community would frankly, be impossible. We can't fight a different battle in each community over a different interpretation of what is obscene. We don't have the time or the resources.
- 2) The rating system used for movies provides parents a tried and true guideline for evaluating whether or not movies are suitable for their children. This proposed legislation allows others to make that decision and force their moral beliefs on us all. We believe that is an infringement on our first amendment rights as both parents and business owners. Parents are the best equipped to make decisions about what their children should and shouldn't watch. We work hard to educate parents about the workings of the rating system and we also work hard to enforce the attendance restrictions for R-rated movies.
- 3) We believe that this legislation will open the door for expensive legal battles over what is and isn't obscene according to each individuals personal moral beliefs. Our business operates on a slim margin and this type of litigation will put us out of business.
- 4) Film Companies may refuse to service theatres in areas where local ordinances are adopted because of uncertainties in local laws. Without the product provided by these companies, all of our theatres would close.

A few folks in every community believe that it is their obligation and right to dictate to all within the town what their standards of conduct and the definition of obscenity should be. The voluntary ratings information and enforcement system that the motion picture industry has operated under for the last 30 years is the most successful in the world. This legislation allows a few citizens to undermine the rating system and dictate what we and other parents deem appropriate for our children.